

Essay: #1

Length: 1,000 words

Due Date: first draft in lecture Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>; second draft in lecture Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>

Late penalty: 5% a day

You will be writing two versions of this paper. The first one is due in lecture Feb. 6th. A revised and edited version is due in lecture 20<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to submit your essays to your tutorial leader. You must submit the original, marked draft along with the final version. The grade you receive on the revised essay will be the mark you receive for the assignment, but you must do both versions to receive a grade.

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Sophocles' play *Oedipus the King* was first performed almost 2,500 years ago. *Everyman* was probably first performed some 500 years ago. The action of these plays takes place in worlds that are radically different from our own. Your job, in this essay, is to choose one of the plays and make it understandable for a contemporary audience. To do this you must first decide what is the most difficult element of the play for a modern audience to understand. Is it the Greek notion of fate? Is it the Christian practice of confession and penance? Is it the political system that allows a king to seize the crown through force and intelligence rather than birthright? Is it the idea of prophecy? Is it the use of allegory? Or perhaps it's the chorus, a device rarely used in modern theatre. You decide. Be sure to support your argument with direct references to the text.

Second, briefly describe how you would direct a production of the play to make this crucial element clear and understandable to a modern audience. Would you set the play in modern times? Would you add stage action or symbolic costumes and props? Would you cast specific types of actors? You can be as imaginative as you like, but you must justify your artistic decisions.